



72nd Year

July 21, 2024

Pamphlet #29 (3712)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Matthew 8:5-13)

Faith that saves

At that time, as Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, beseeching him and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress." And he said to him, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion answered him, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard him, he marveled, and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth." And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; be it done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

THE GREAT FAITH

The Lord, in His earthly presence, began to manifest His power to the world, preaching and working miracles, but also to form His disciples in His own image, imparting the divine word and spiritual gifts to them.

Those who surrounded Him certainly partially understood His divine origin and for this reason, they gave various answers. The Centurion in the Gospel of the Fourth Sunday of Matthew confesses his faith in Christ, even before the Lord heals his sick child. This event makes Christ admire his faith and say: "I assure you that I did not find so much faith even among the Israelites. And I tell you that many will come from the east and the west and will sit with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the table of the Kingdom of Heaven, while the heirs of the Kingdom will be cast out into the darkness..."

The Jewish temptation

It is an unfortunate fact that many times, we humans either consider ourselves great, or we feel like our brothers' guardians. While sometimes, next to our Christian identity, we attribute to ourselves an earthly identity that fills us with pride, and we think that we are more faithful than others, or we reject them. There is nothing more vain than showing off historical titles of glory in order to brag about them to one's brothers. It is precisely a sign of the decline of a human group for it to refer for a long time to its past, as if it is afraid that it is not valued enough in the present. Wasn't that how the Scribes and Pharisees reacted when they saw Christ healing, and conversing with sinners and foreigners? The Jewish people are the first who did not believe the mystery of the universality of salvation, which the God-man Lord came to give us.

Recruitment of Nations

The faith that caused the admiration of Christ was not the faith of a disciple of His, nor of a fellow Jew, but the faith of an idolater, a Roman officer. Christ opens Himself to the Gentiles and sends His disciples to them, to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, to baptize them in the name of the Triune Godhead, and to heal every disease of God's people.

This is also why the Church carries out its missionary work to peoples who are "in a desert land, in the thirst of burning heat,

in a dry land" (Deut. 32:10); so that all nations may be entrusted to Christ and find themselves there only in Him.

Catholicity, as the acceptance of everything in Christ, is for the Christian peoples, the magnificent dimension of their ecumenicity. We Christians in the Church are those who possess everything and yet we are like those who have nothing, because catholicity is, essentially, sharing – sharing the spiritual culture that is always humility, delicacy, and tenderness of heart. The Church, which knows that it receives everything from its Lord, which came into being only from His gaze, recognizes itself as the absolute poor one, and the poor one does not even have the consciousness of an existence that belongs to it. We Christians feel that we receive everything from our Lord and from the consolation of our brothers.

The extension of the mystery of Christ in the life of the Church until the close of the age entails not only the recruitment of nations into the Church with all their cultural identity, but also their transcendence in the function of the single ecclesiastical body of the world.

Orthodox and reality

This truth makes Orthodoxy contribute substantially to the reality of the world and to the functional completeness of European civilization, even in difficult times, to minister with love and sacrifice to every human being, the human being of our time, wherever he is on the earth, who every day struggles and agonizes for peace, justice, and unity of the entire world.

† F. A.

All evil today comes from unbelief

In the past, the world believed; even the most indifferent person had faith within him. The people may have been simple; they may not have understood anything they heard in church. Some did not even know that there are four Gospels; they thought there were twelve, but what faith they had, what piety!

And the nurses, what bravery they had! How many went to war as volunteers! They had both faith and sacrifice and helped a lot. Today someone told me that a sick person was saying the Creed and the nurse was beating him, because she thought he was casting a spell on her! She didn't even know the Creed! Where have we reached! You ask young children: "What do you believe?" "I don't know," they tell you, "I haven't figured it out yet." "What is the religion of your mother, your father?" "I don't know; I didn't ask them." He was not interested in knowing what religion his parents have! When someone is so indifferent, how can he be helped?

(From the book of the Apostolic Ministry:
Anthology of Counsels of Saint Paisios the Hagiorite)

July 21, 2024: 4TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW
Saints John and Simeon the Fools for Christ († 590). Parthenios Bishop.
Tone: 3 – Eothinon: 4 – Epistle: Rom. 6:18-23 – Gospel: Matt. 8:5-13
NEXT SUNDAY: July 28, 5th Sunday of Matthew
Epistle: Romans 10:1-10 – Gospel: Matthew 8:28-9:1

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